SPONSA REGIS

AUGUST
1954

A SPIRITUAL REVIEW FOR SISTERS

SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

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Pope Pius XII

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SAINTS OF THE MONTH APPEAL TO YOU

Dear Sister,

Many saints are honored by the Church throughout the month of August, but since our gloriously reigning Holy Father, Pius XII, defined the doctrine of the Assumption, that feast quite naturally overshadows all others.

Its new Mass is worthy of study for all who would know better the Mother of God. In it we see the glorified Virgin in the person of the Woman clothed with the sun (*Introit*), in the King's daughter, apparelled in robes of gold (*Gradual*), in the Woman whom the proto-evangel announces as the enemy of the serpent (*Offertory*). To her are applied the praises of Judith after her victory over Holofernes (*Epistle*), and her great thanksgiving canticle (*Gospel*), the Magnificat marks the final dawn of man's redemption.

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SPONSA REGIS
August 1954 Vol. xxv, No. 12

ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN

IN his encyclical, *Fulgens Corona*, our Holy Father proposes as a special aim of this Year of Mary the acquisition of a better knowledge of our Blessed Mother's personality, mission, and sanctity. The Mass formularies for the feasts of the Blessed Virgin furnish us abundant material for the attainment of this purpose. The definition of the dogma of the bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven has also brought us a new Mass for this feast, a proper of such depth and beauty that we feel, so to say, the breath of the Holy Spirit pervading it. It displays before us the glory of our heavenly Mother as the great sign that appeared in heaven, the mission assigned to her on earth, her exaltation and the continuation of her mission in the Church Militant.

THE GREAT SIGN — INTROIT

"A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. Sing to the Lord a new song, because He has done wonderful things."

This is a grandiose picture of our Blessed Mother and the key to the understanding of the rest of the Mass. Mary enthroned in heavenly glory with body and soul is that great sign. A sign conveys a message, and the message of this sign is that Satan and sin have been completely and definitely defeated. Bodily immortality, lost through the sin of our first parents, has been restored, and that more gloriously than it was in the beginning. Mary, the Mother of the Conqueror over sin and death and Co-redemptrix, is the first one to share in the fruits of this victory.

For the rest of the faithful Mary's Assumption is the pledge and pattern of their own resurrection on the final day of judgment.

The Woman is clothed with the sun. Jesus, the Sun of justice, fills and envelops her with His divine splendor. What else could we expect of the Mother of God who is Light and dwells in inaccessible light? The moon, the symbol of change and night, is at her feet. Eternity knows no change; and as even the brightest moonlight is darkness, when compared to the splendor of the noonday sun, so all knowledge of faith in this life, compared to the brightness of the beatific vision, is but darkness and night. Mary beholds also with her bodily eyes the glories of the heavenly City, of which the Lamb, her own divine Son, is the Lamp. A crown of twelve stars is on her head — twelve, the number of perfection and universality. Whatever virtue is found in any angel or saint, is possessed by Mary in a higher degree, and all the saints that entered the Holy City through its twelve gates are her crown. Not one of them has reached the goal without her help and inspiration. She is the Mediatrix of all graces and the spiritual Mother of all the blessed in heaven.

The reaction to the vision of this glorious sign is the word of the prophet: "Sing to the Lord a new song, because He has done wonderful things." It arouses desire for heaven and inspires the petition of the collect, "Almighty, eternal God, who didst take up into heavenly glory the Immaculate Virgin Mary with soul and body, grant, we pray, that we may ever keep our minds set on the things that are above and make ourselves worthy of a share in her glory."

CONQUERESS OF SATAN — EPISTLE

The epistle relates the story of Judith, the type of Mary. That valiant woman, chosen by God to deliver her people from enslavement by the Assyrians, cut off the head of Holofernes, the leader of the hostile forces. Mary is the antitype of Judith, she the valiant woman chosen from all eternity to crush the head of Satan, who as the leader of the powers of hell, enslaved in his deadly grip the whole of mankind. She crushed the head of the serpent in her Immaculate Conception. She crushed it by her humble and unconditional surrender to the will of God, the counterpart of Satan's pride and rebellion. The praises addressed

to Judith by the representatives of her people anticipate the praises addressed to Mary by all the redeemed: "Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord, the most high God, above all the women upon the earth. . . . He has so magnified thy name this day, that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men . . . , for that thou hast not spared thy life . . . but hast prevented our ruin. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people." Mary not only exposed her life to sorrow and death as Judith did, but suffered anguish and pain, that would have caused her death a thousand times, had not divine power supported her. Her sorrow is like the ocean overwhelming her, like a sword piercing her heart. And so she is the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem as the Queen of all saints, the joy of Israel, the Church Militant on earth, the honor of the whole human race. And must not we here in the United States think of the honor of having the Immaculate Virgin as the patroness of our beloved country?

MOTHER OF MEN — GRADUAL

Christ is the Second Adam, the father and head of a new race; Mary is not only His Mother, but also His spiritual Bride standing at His side as the Second Eve, the Mother of all living by the life of God. Mary was not forced into this her office. In the gradual we hear in mystical language the call and invitation addressed to her by the King of heaven: "Hearken, O Daughter, and see and incline thine ear, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty." That indeed was the burden of the message brought to Mary by Gabriel the archangel. Mary accepts the invitation and "the daughter of the King enters all adorned, of cloth of gold is her raiment." That cloth of gold is woven of the uncreated love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the created love of Mary's heart. This is the call to divine Motherhood, which kept her close to Jesus in His life on earth and close to Him in heaven through her glorious Assumption.

BLESSED AMONG WOMEN — GOSPEL

Mary's election to be the Mother of God and the spiritual Mother of the redeemed made her the blessed one among women. As such she was greeted at the Annunciation, and as such she is addressed by Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit: "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,"

The blessings pronounced by the patriarchs and foretold by the prophets find their fulfilment in the Messias, and Mary is His Mother. Blessings untold she has brought to the world; we see their beginning on the occasion of her visit to Elizabeth. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, and the child in her womb leaps with joy at the presence of the Savior sanctifying him even before his birth.

Mary herself is fully conscious of the blessings which God has bestowed upon her and through her will bestow upon mankind. And thus there wells forth from her heart the incomparable *Magnificat,* that song of love and thanksgiving which only the Holy Spirit could compose and only His Immaculate Spouse could sing: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. . . . Because He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is His Name." The *Magnificat* is not the passing expression of a loving heart's gratitude; it will resound throughout all eternity proclaiming the great things which the Lord has done to her and through her to all the blessed.

WARFARE AND VICTORY PERPETUATED — OFFERTORY

The offertory verse is striking: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed." The enmities and warfare are between the powers of hell and the forces of good, beginning in Paradise, raging through the centuries, and continuing to the end of time. They reached their climax in the Passion and Death of the Savior, and the Savior's bloody Sacrifice is mystically perpetuated in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The offertory begins the sacrificial part of the Mass. Mary is inseparable from it, as she is inseparable from the bloody Sacrifice of her divine Son. The struggle and victory on Calvary are to be re-enacted until the consummation of the world. Does not the insertion of this verse at this place remind us of the fact that the Christian warfare is carried on under the eyes and the protection of Mary? But it furthermore impresses upon us the truth that, as Christ died in offering His sacrifice and His blessed Mother would have died under the impact of those dreadful events, had not divine power supported her, so our life must be a continuous self-immolation.

Paradoxical as it may appear, it is the decree of divine wisdom and love, that death should become the source of life, since

death, freely chosen through sin, put an end to the divine life in man. Thus holy Church sings in the preface of Passion time: "Thou hast accomplished the salvation of the human race on the Cross, so that he who had conquered on a tree, on a tree might also be defeated." Or as the Easter preface puts it, "He has destroyed death by dying, and by rising from the dead has created life anew." As Christ's apparent defeat is perpetuated in the Mass, so likewise is His victory. Thus this offertory chant lends a particular coloring to the Mass of this feast. It directs our attention to the part which Mary had in the Passion and Death of her divine Son as the way to her eternal triumph in her glorious Assumption.

In like manner does the holy Sacrifice of the Mass prepare the Christian for his daily warfare with the enemy. The remembrance of Christ's and His blessed Mother's glorious triumph will arouse courage, love, loyalty, and the unconquerable will to persevere to the end. The secret prayer of the Mass is the expression of this thought: "May the gift of our devotion rise up to Thee, O Lord, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, taken up into heaven, may our hearts enkindled by the fire of love incessantly long for Thee."

BLESSED FOREVER — COMMUNION VERSE

"All generations shall call me blessed, because He who is mighty has done great things for me." Holy Mass has been offered in honor of the Blessed Virgin and thus was part of the fulfilment of this prophecy. But this chant is meant also for us, for all those who join the Savior and His Blessed Mother in the conflict with the powers of darkness. Blessed are they; the Lord has done great things for them. Our holy faith, Mass and holy Communion, are things exceedingly great. And as the relation of Mary to Jesus is the ultimate reason for all her grace and glory, so our union with Christ, reaching its climax in holy Communion, is the reason for all the blessedness that has come to us, that will terminate in life everlasting: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:55).

Inspired with such heavenly ideals, we pray in the postcommunion, "Having received the Sacrament of salvation, we pray, O Lord, grant that through the intercession and the merits of the

Blessed Virgin, assumed into heaven, we may be brought to the glory of the resurrection."

The wonderful thoughts presented in the new Mass of the Assumption, if reflected upon, cannot but inspire a believing heart to full surrender in the service of God. Mary assumed into heaven is the great sign, the beacon light that shows us the goal: heavenly transfiguration with Christ and with His blessed Mother. The way to it is the Christian warfare: Satan must be defeated, sin must be kept out of our lives. This earth with its worldly ideals, pleasures, and attractions cannot be allowed to absorb our interest. All our attention and our efforts must be given to the things that are above, where Christ is and His holy Mother. Such a life is a life of daily self-immolation, but the daily Sacrifice of the altar will supply abundant strength to do and to endure. With these thoughts and desires in our hearts, with unwavering loyalty to Christ our Leader, with filial love and devotion and trust in our heavenly Mother, the final outcome of our efforts and struggles can be but one — our own glorious resurrection and assumption into heaven.

Mount Grace Convent A. BISKUPEK, S.V.D.
St. Louis, Missouri

"IT IS GOD'S WORK, NOT MINE"

ON February 2, 1953, in the Motherhouse of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, Sittard, Holland, the ordinary process for the beatification of Mother Mary Teresa of St. Joseph, Foundress, was solemnly opened by the Bishop of Roermond, Holland.

Many who read this will never before have even heard her name. Who was Mother Mary Teresa? One of those truly great souls, who can confidingly and courageously trust in God's Providence and become pliant instruments in His hands, one who worked and watched with vigilant solicitude as though all depended on her, but prayed and trusted as though all depended on God, as of course all did.

Externally, her childhood and youth were not remarkable. Hers was the joy of a good home and pious parents, and she

grew from a good and pious child into an intelligent and capable young woman with a heroic longing to prove her love for God by sacrificing herself for Him in the service of her fellow men. Her interior life, however, was remarkable. That this child, daughter of a Lutheran pastor, should be led by the Holy Spirit to such heights, while yet externally outside the fold of the true Church, that she should imbibe such a thoroughly Catholic spirit, though far removed from Catholic influence, and develop a truly interior life of prayer, love for our Lady, and loyalty to Christ's Vicar, is a tribute to her docility, as well as an admirable example of the loving care of our heavenly Father for a soul beloved of His Heart.

In her autobiography, which she wrote so that her spiritual daughters might understand that the founding of the Carmel of the Divine Heart was God's work and be filled with gratitude and zeal, she tells us that she was born in Sandow, near Frankfurt on the Oder, June 19, 1855, and lived there until she was six years old. Her father was pastor of the little Lutheran Church there (her grandfather and all his ancestors since the days of the so-called Reformation had been ministers), and gave much of his time in this peaceful country place to music and painting. Her mother was one of those benevolent souls who seem to live for the sake of doing good to others, and little Anna Maria, as the future Mother Mary Teresa was named at her Baptism, was her companion on many errands of mercy to the poor, the sick, and the troubled.

Mother Mary Teresa tells of a dream, when she was about five years old, as one of the earliest recollections of childhood days. "In our drawing room I saw our divine Savior surrounded by many children. His countenance, expressing love and kindness, enkindled in me the fire of divine love. From that time on I became more serious, for the picture of our Savior was always before my eyes and filled me with the desire that all children should love God as I did. That there should be grown-ups who would not love Him, I did not even surmise."

She calls this dream "a great grace" and, considering the remarkable guidance given her in sleep in later years, it may well be called such. At any rate, it may be considered an apt presage of the work she was later to accomplish in the many

St. Joseph's Homes she established as refuges for homeless children.

Seeking a sacrifice worthy of the immense love of God for her, Anna Maria Tauscher at the age of thirty years applied for the position of head nurse at the municipal insane asylum in Lindenburg, near Cologne, with the prayer: "O God, I will apply for that position, and if it is Thy holy will, grant that I am accepted. I will go there to prove my love for Thee, no matter what the cost." She was accepted, and remarks: "I was very much surprised when I received my father's approval without any hesitation on his part."

She arrived in Cologne March 6, 1886, during a terrific storm, an exterior picture of the turmoil in her soul. Yet, she tells us, the thought of giving up never entered her mind and soon she had brought new life into this institute, giving it a happy, family atmosphere. Since she received sufficient money for personal expenses from her parents, Miss Tauscher, as she was here addressed, used her salary to provide festive occasions for her patients and to bury the dead, when there were no relatives to do this. She tells us, that those who could still realize that their unclaimed bodies would be sent to the medical school were terrified at the thought. She pitied them and gave the reassuring promise that she would arrange for their burial.

In Lindenburg Anna Maria saw the beauty of the month of May for the first time and grasped something of the loving veneration of the faithful for our Lady, whom she already much admired. In doing an act of charity, by accompanying a patient to the chapel of the Good Shepherd at Melsten, she was also here privileged to attend Mass for the first time, a solemn High Mass.

Her first efforts to enter the Church were discouraged, because it was well known how irate her father would be if she became a Catholic. She repeated her requests, for she could not resist the pleadings of grace. On October 30, 1888, she made her profession of faith, thereby forfeiting her position and her home.

Without a recommendation and with the ill will of the director at Lindenburg, she could not obtain work. A Catholic friend came to the rescue by getting her a temporary position

doing domestic work in a home for aged women conducted by Sisters. Though she was cheerful and humbly resigned, her sad plight grieved new found friends, who eventually got her a home as companion to Mrs. von Savigny (Countess Stolberg) in Berlin. In this pious lady's home there were advantages for the new convert, yet she missed the convent life and the idea of founding an Order began to take possession of her thoughts, despite her resistance. After she had read the life of St. Teresa, for which she at first felt an aversion, her decision was made; she would be a Carmelite. To her surprise her director did not approve. Years later, when she had ceased to regard her desire to found an Order as a temptation and had begun the work for love of God and souls, he wrote from his mission in Brazil: "It was too bad you did not come out with your inner feelings. I wanted you to do it."

In 1891 Anna Maria began a small home, the first St. Joseph's Home, in Berlin, with the consent of Monsignor Jahnel, representative of Cardinal Kopp. Her first charges numbered three children, and they were housed in a red brick building that corresponded to a vision of some years past. Now began in earnest the life of sacrifice so eagerly desired. For many years Anna Maria Tauscher was to wear herself out in behalf of the children she loved, and of the aged, and the sheep that had strayed from the fold. She ardently desired to consecrate herself to God by the three vows of religion and also to have the joy of the Eucharistic Presence in the Home, but her first request was refused. Undaunted, she longingly prayed that this grace would eventually be given, as indeed it was. In later years she was to count new foundations, as the great St. Teresa before her had done, as so many new Tabernacles for our Lord.

Her greatest trial was to meet the determined opposition of Cardinal Kopp to her resolve to wear the habit and observe the Rule of the Order of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Three journeys to Rome, plus much opposition and innumerable trials, were to test her devotion to Carmel. The situation grew so bad that one of Mother Mary Teresa's early companions made her promise not to pray for sufferings any more, lest the new Congregation never obtain the approbation of Rome! Before the first approbation came, her work had spread to several countries, and her de-

voted co-workers waited patiently and prayed for the day when they would become religious.

The Carmelite Fathers in Rome were sympathetic from the outset and on her first journey to Rome in 1897, the Father General invested her with the habit of the Order. On her journey homeward, the nuns of the Linz Carmel gave her the white mantle of Carmel.

In 1904 permission to open a Motherhouse in Rocca de Papa, near Rome, was granted, thus removing a big obstacle. Here the novices from Sittard, Holland, the first cradle of the Order, and from Maldon, England, were permitted to make temporary vows. In 1910 the *Decretum Laudis* was received from the hand of the saintly Pius X; May 12, 1930, his successor in name and office, Pius XI, gave the final approbation to the Congregation and to the Constitutions.

Our good Mother lingered on, a guide and beautiful example to her spiritual daughters, for eight years more after this culmination of her desires. But her desire "to go home" steadily increased and the loving Father in heaven, to whom her sighs were addressed, called her to Himself on the 20th of September, 1938.

On July 2, 1891, a vision had symbolically revealed the work that was to be hers and she was told: "If you found this Order for Me, if you take these sufferings upon yourself signified by this large cross, then My Son will be your everlasting reward." To a Sister, who once told her in the early days of the foundation, that she would soon be dead if she continued to work so hard, Mother replied: "I will not die until the servants of the Sacred Heart[1] are spread throughout the world."

Now at the close of her life, with the Order firmly established, she felt she could say: "I am no longer needed. I am firmly convinced that all the sacrifices were necessary. But one thing I know, if the Holy Rule is not observed as it was given, really and truly according to the spirit, all blessing will vanish. Some superiors esteem observance above charity, but that is not our spirit. Love comes first!"

Her work was done — well done, when she left us. It is for her spiritual daughters to carry on and they have promised to do so by engraving on her tomb: "Mother, we thank thee; Mother, we follow thee."

That the process for her beatification should commence so soon, was at the counsel of the Most Reverend Bishop of Roermond, Holland, who knew and admired Mother Mary Teresa. Often during her life Mother had said of the counsel or command of the bishops, in whose dioceses she labored, or where she was refused permission to work, "Bishop's voice, God's voice." May it be so now, and may we see the happy conclusion of the process now under way at the General Motherhouse in Sittard, Holland.[2]

Carmel D.C.J. SISTER TERESA MARGARET
San Antonio, Texas

THE APOSTOLATE OF VICTIM SOULS (I)

THE drift of our thoughts has carried us to new pastures in the spiritual life. These pastures are unknown to the listless, heedless world, going on its way to the beckoning of its own will, heeding no sign-posts, closing its ears to all sound save the fairy music of its playtime and the siren-voice of sin.

The pastures to which our thoughts have lured us are the innumerable sanctuaries of the most holy Sacrament in our hamlets, villages, towns, and cities, where multitudes of angels are consoling Jesus and making reparation, because human hearts treat Him with coldness and ingratitude. Victim souls have discovered these rich pastures and, with the aid of sanctifying grace, they transmute the ordinary things of life, especially their sufferings, into eternal values by immolating themselves with Jesus through Mary in order to become the mirrors of His divine immolation on the sacrificial altar of the Mass. They offer themselves with the divine Victim to expiate the sins of the world.

TRUE FRIENDS OF CHRIST

Hidden away in peaceful cloisters, or lost in the ebb and flow of the turbulent world of which they are the saving element, these victim souls form the choice battalions of the heroic friends and lovers

[1]Now called Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus.

[2]The autobiography of the Servant of God, Mother Mary Teresa of St. Joseph, translated by Rev. Berchmans Bittle, O.F.M.Cap., has been published by the Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is also obtainable from the convents of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus,

of Jesus Christ. At first we cannot believe in their existence, we cannot absorb the reality of such a vocation, and we think we must be mistaken, that such greatness, such unselfishness, such love, cannot exist in this worthless, ephemeral world of ours. It differs so vastly from all we meet in our daily lives; it seems to have come as a vision from another land and another life; but it is a moving discovery to find these heroic souls, who have entered fully into the spirit of the redemption and who feel a sudden surge of anguished love for those souls who reject the Redeemer's love and are estranged from Him by sin. They long to make reparation for the injury done to souls by the sins they commit, and to console the afflicted Heart of Jesus outraged by the infidelity and ingratitude of those He has redeemed. Love of God, whom they see so ill-served; love of the Saviour, whom they see so ill-repaid; love of souls, whom they see so lamentably lost; this is the love that inspires the reparation of victim souls.

THE EUCHARIST, CENTER OF THEIR LIVES

The ideals of victim souls are spreading throughout the world. They kneel at the foot of the Cross, lifting up their hearts to gaze on the wounded Heart of Christ dripping out Its story of love and sacrifice for men, and for love of Him they surrender themselves and give Him their all and, being ever conscious that the Sacrifice of the Mass perpetuates the Sacrifice of Calvary, they hasten often to the Eucharistic altar to offer themselves in union with Christ offered and immolated for the sins of the world. "Thus it is clear, what place in the doctrine of reparation is taken by the Sacrifice of Calvary, and by the Mass which is its enactment, and also by that sorrow for sin which desires to associate itself for purposes of reparation with the redemptive Cross of the divine Master. It is not without reason, therefore, that souls desirous of making reparation love to make the Eucharistic Sacrifice the centre of their lives, and to live their whole lives in a spirit of sacrifice" (Plus, *Our Part in Reparation,* page 51). We shall see this more clearly as we proceed.

SOULS LONGING TO ATONE

"It is only during the last seventy-five years reparation has become better understood," writes Abbe L. Laplace, "For, outraged by the fearful excesses of evil, divine Providence has awakened in a number of faithful hearts an insatiable longing to atone, through the transports of their own ardent love, for the cold selfishness or the insolent outbursts of impiety that is the prevailing evil of the modern age. Imbued with this notion of reparation, many Congregations have sprung into being, each having its own peculiar end, rule and character." At God's call each appeared in His garden of souls, where there is endless variety and no monotony. Our Blessed Lord has inspired many of these Congregations to dedicate themselves to a life of effective reparation, and thus take an active and voluntary part in His sufferings. One of them is worthy of mention: "The Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus," founded by Mother Mary of Jesus (Deluil-Martiny),

for from it blossomed "The Association of Victim Souls in Union with the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary". All these communities, but especially "The Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus," endeavour to reproduce in its fullness the mystery of the life and death of Jesus in union with the Church, which, according to St. Paul, "is his Body, and the fullness of him, who is filled all in all" (Ephesians 1:23).

IMMOLATED WITH JESUS

"Herein lies a strange phenomenon," writes Abbe Laplace, "Which has always attracted the attention of the Christian philosopher. In time Christ suffers no more. No longer does He trudge toward Calvary, His bleeding shoulders bent under the heavy weight of the Cross; not now does the pious pilgrim find on dread Golgotha the upstanding Cross embracing the Man-God's agonizing Body, for now the Hill of Atonement is a marble-covered rock where a church marks the place of the Holy Rood's planting. Nevertheless, throughout the world are heard blasphemies like those that sullied the air in Pilate's hall, taunts like those that whipped Christ up the way of the Cross, blows and curses like those rained on Him when He reached the crest of Calvary; and among Christ's disciples of today too often are discernible yesterday's cringing prudence and self-effacement. Now and then, however, a Simon of Cyrene is generous enough to accept his share of the weight of the Cross in the ascent to Calvary with the divine Master. Veronicas wipe His bleeding countenance with the fine linen of prayerful atonement. Holy women weep; in short, all truly generous and holy souls in some measure partake of the sufferings of the Passion, as if it were still being enacted before their shocked vision, and they resolve to offer their lives and to be immolated with Jesus, who is perpetually offered on our altars for the salvation of the world." For that end they accept and offer to Him whatever pains, griefs, humiliations, sorrows, and crosses are strewn along the pathway of the passing day, by His divine Providence, and they gladly and joyfully offer through Mary these sacrificial acts according to the intentions for which the Sacred Heart of Jesus offers and immolates Itself, and they pray that their sacrifices may bring blessings on the Church, the priesthood, religious, their country, and especially on all poor sinners. Such is the ideal of VICTIM SOULS, who are the privileged ones of crucified love.

REDEMPTIVE VALUE OF SUFFERING

There are many pious souls who do not know as well as they ought the precise meaning of suffering and its redemptive value. We have seen that suffering is not an evil, but that it may become a good. Suffering, when borne patiently and united to the sufferings of Christ, enlightens, detaches, purifies, sanctifies, converts souls. But we must seek to make this union with Christ as close and constant as our weakness will permit, entering into His spirit of Priest and Victim by offering and sacrificing ourselves out of love and in union with Him. "We have two principal means of uniting with the Passion of Christ:

the liturgy and the acceptance of the sufferings of our daily life," writes Pere Bernadot. "The altar perpetuates Calvary. In order that the graces of His death on the Cross may be applied to all men in every age, Jesus unceasingly renews His Sacrifice. He continues to be priest and victim. "At the Communion He comes as Priest. A priest's office is to adore and expiate. Within us He gives God perfect adoration, complete thanksgiving; He brings down pardon and divine grace. Within us He adores, thanks, prays and makes reparation. All these acts of the eternal High Priest which are done in us, become ours if we so will. We can make our own all Christ's adoration, supplication, expiation. The interior movement which bore Jesus to His Father can become the interior movement of our life. We can render the most perfect homage to God, as the liturgy says: 'By Him and with Him and in Him be to Thee, Almighty Father, all honour and glory in the unity of the Holy Ghost.'" "Jesus also comes as a Victim. In His state of immolation He comes as sacrificial Victim, with the holiness, if we may put it so, of the Christ-Victim. The sacrificial Host is kept apart from every profane contact, consecrated to God. These are, according to St. Thomas, the marks of living holiness: freedom from earthly things by purity and firm adhesion to God. The liturgy makes us share in the sublime holiness of Christ on the Cross, where He was moved by pure love of His Father, where He was 'an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness'" (Eph. 5:21). "What a source of grace for the Christian who truly takes part in the Mass! He pays to God the most perfect homage of filial adoration: he draws directly from the wellspring of all grace; he intensifies his inner life by contact with the Death of Christ; little by little he becomes a living victim offered every day with the divine Victim of Calvary. The Christian vocation is thus fulfilled."

TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF VICTIM SOULS

The expression "Victim Souls" frightens some good and holy people, and in their minds there may exist some slight confusion as to its true significance. Tanquerey, the eminent theologian, writes: "If the eternal Son of God became man, it was to dwell among us and, what is still more, to dwell in us. As God He lives in us by His grace. He comes in order to give us a share in His own divine life. As man He is present to us in the sense that He has the most intimate, the most affectionate, and the most sanctifying relations with us. He is the Head of a Mystical Body, the Church, of which we are the members . . . It is Baptism that incorporates us into Christ. For St. Paul says: 'For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body' (1 Cor. 12:13). For this reason he adds that we have been baptized in Christ, that in Baptism we put on Christ (cf. Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:25; Rom. 13:17); that is to say, we participate in the interior dispositions of Christ . . . Hence it is that our spiritual life flows from Christ, our Head, who possesses it in all its fullness and communicates it to us. Our measure of grace and holiness, therefore, is but an extension of

the holiness of Christ and, because of this, every true Christian can say with St. Paul: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me'" (Gal. 2:20).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DOCTRINE

"It is impossible," writes Tanquerey, "that our union with Our Lord could be more intimate than it is, and it follows as a natural consequence that His life is our life. St. Augustine, referring to the origin of the union that exists between Christ and the Christian, says: 'The same grace which made Christ to be our Head made us His members. By that grace whereby any man becomes a Christian from the commencement of his faith, by the same grace that Man from the beginning was made Christ. By the selfsame Spirit by whose operation he was born, the man is born again. Thus it is true to say that the Christian is another Christ: CHRISTIANUS ALTER CHRISTUS!'" But what do we conclude from this? "It follows that the life of a Christian is essentially that of a victim. Why so? He is a victim by virtue of his Baptism and his union with Christ, and we know from what has been said above that Christ is pre-eminently a sacrificial victim." Ideas or ideals of reparation, which sufficed formerly for ardent souls, no longer satisfy the aspirations of hearts aflame for sacrifice. This wonderful efflorescence of sublime vocations who are dedicated to take an active, but voluntary, part in the sufferings of Our Blessed Redeemer as willing victims, in order to expiate their sins and the sins of others, hold the promise of regeneration for the world in these latter days.

WE NEED THE VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE

But we need the virtue of fortitude to carry out our vocation as victim souls. This virtue, called also strength of soul, strength of character, spiritual vigour, is a supernatural, moral virtue that strengthens the soul in the pursuit of arduous moral good, without allowing it to be deterred by fear, even the fear of death. Fortitude is found in perfection in Our Lord and His saints. It is not only seen in the martyrs and confessors, but in all Christian souls who "manfully fight under His banner against sin, the world, the flesh and the devil." It may sometimes appear easier to die for His sake than to live for Him. Christian fortitude is always inspired and governed and increased by love, especially by love of the Crucified Saviour. It is not stoicism or fatalism that is its strength, but the knowledge that all our endurance, however small, and all our crosses, whether light or heavy, can be made a part of the Passion and borne in His company and shared by Him, as in some mystic sense we are allowed to "fill up . . . that which is lacking of the sufferings in our flesh, for His Body, which is the Church" (cf. Col. 1:24). For whatever is "lacking" is not in His own sufferings, which merited our salvation, but in our sufferings for Him and in Him. He says to every disciple who hears the call to follow Him: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). The cross is the denial of

self: and Christian fortitude is to learn, like St. Paul, to glory . . . in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).

"WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO REMISSION"

"Every generous soul," writes Plus, "can understand the meaning of the above words and the example of Calvary. Throughout the centuries every act of generosity owes its inspiration to Him who from His pierced side sheds forth a wondrous light, so piercing in its intensity and yet so benign. It is in Him that the divine history of the world centres, in Him whom we call the King and Centre of all hearts. It has ever been and ever will be the desire of fervent souls to have so intense a love for the Passion, that it becomes gradually a part of their lives. It must not be supposed that they have an unhealthy desire for suffering as an end in itself; they regard it as a means — and the best means available — of finding Love, of inviting Love, and of union with Love itself." (To be continued)

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RELIGIOUS AND THE ROSARY (II)

THE DIVINE MODEL

"BE ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." This seems an invitation to an impossible ambition, a pointing out of an invisible vision. For as St. John tells us, "no one has at any time seen God." Yet he continues: "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him." It is the wonder of the Incarnation.

"O world invisible, we view thee;
O world intangible, we touch thee;
O world unknowable, we know thee;
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee."
In No Strange Land by Francis Thompson.

In the first chapter of his Gospel St. John dwells upon this sublime truth. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made through him. . . . In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not. . . . It was the true light that enlightens every man that comes into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But to as many as received him he gave the power of becoming sons of God; to those who believe in his name. . . , who were born of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among

us. And we saw his glory — glory as of the only-begotten of the Father — full of grace and truth. . . . And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace. . . . Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

The supreme model of all created things is the eternal Word of God in the bosom of the Father, the Word made man in the divinely chosen centre of time.

The eternal Word was the Model used by God the Father in the work of creation. An artist at work enshrines some ideal in his material; he sets some vision of beauty in words or sound, in color or stone. A human masterpiece is such a noble conception brought to birth in beauty. In creating, God the Father was filled with His Ideal — not any vanishing vision or borrowed beauty, but an infinitely perfect, a divine Person — the eternal Word. "All things were made through him." "And God created man to his own image" (Gen. 1:27). All created things, and above all man, were fashioned after the divine Ideal, the eternal Word of God.

A human artist imposes his ideal on matter, sometimes with a chisel, always with tyranny. But God acts in a more noble manner with His intelligent creatures. He reveals His Ideal to them. The Word is revealed. Not only did marvels of the heavens and of earth speak His glory; "God, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past" (Heb. 1:1). The divine Word was spoken to human ears, but men forget. The divine Word was written on scrolls of parchment, but scrolls curl up in the corners of the world.

The divine Word remained unheard and unread. It was not enough for forgetful and short-sighted men to hear or read the revelation of God. If they were to know their divine Ideal intimately, they must *see* the Word written in flesh, they must hear the Word speaking among men, they must feel the pulse of the Master's life.

One day that wonder took place. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." He was stared at by eager eyes. He was touched by reaching hands. Our divine Ideal walked the earth with human steps, and was called by a human Name, "Jesus Christ". Men gazed upon the Word Incarnate.

The heavens dropped down dew. The earth opened to bud forth the Savior. The eternal Word was born in time, of the race of Adam,

of the family of David, in Bethlehem, of an Immaculate Virgin. Our Lord was born; the ancient age of man drew to a close and the new age began.

In the Second Adam, in our Lord, man was again elevated to the life of God. In the Second Adam God laid a new bridge for human life to pass over into the life of God. As human life comes from Adam, so divine life comes from Christ. If you are not born of Adam, you shall not have human life. If you are not born again of water and the Spirit, if you do not receive the Flesh and the Blood of the Son of Man, you shall not have divine life. Baptism gives this life; Confirmation increases it; holy Communion preserves and perfects it. Seven channels pour it into the world. But we must come freely to receive it. We must be born of Adam; we may be born of Christ.

St. Paul reveals this divine plan for the progress of man to God: "The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven, heavenly. As was the earthy man, such also are the earthy; and as is the heavenly man, such also are the heavenly. Therefore, even as we have borne the likeness of the earthy, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:27-29).

We are free to become "sharers of the divine nature," as St. Peter tells us, to be "illumined, vivified, beatified," as St. Augustine said. For there is a sort of extension of the Incarnation of Christ in us. "Christ is really born in the souls who believe in Him," says St. Jerome. "Christ grows there; Christ develops there," says St. Paulinus. He becomes so identified with the soul, that our thoughts, our feelings, our life, are the thoughts, the feelings, the life of Christ. This identification is so profound that St. Augustine cries out: "we are not only Christians, but Christ! Let us admire! Let us rejoice! We are made Christ!"

How is this wonder wrought? Listen to our Lord: "Abide in me! I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5). This is the secret. Abiding in Him, union with Him through Baptism, through holy Communion, through prayer, through charity; remaining in Him, living in Him, till we can cry out with St. Paul: "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

No longer need I peer at mountain peaks, nor give ear to the pulse of the sea to catch the shadow and sound of divine attributes. I need not stutter ancient tongues, nor finger dusty tomes to find remote divine proclamations. For "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." And to ears that are eager, to hearts filled with high hopes, He has said: "I am come that you may have life and have it more abundantly. . . . I am the way."

In reflecting on the Incarnation we feel two different emotions. One is a feeling of wonder. The other is a sense of security. We find the Divine in the Incarnation and are filled with wonder. We find the human and feel secure. We feel ourselves in heaven and yet find ourselves at home.

First comes a sense of the marvelous, a realization of the Divine at work in the world, an amazement at the most stupendous event in the circle of the world and down the arches of time. If during a life span in the history of humanity God walked the earth as man, if He came to save the human race, then all history centers on that time and every other event has importance only in relation to it. If He has come to pour into our souls a divine life, which transforms all living, and to bind us to Himself in a union which surpasses understanding and outreaches every human ambition, then there is only one basic question, one crucial concern, one important problem in the life of every one of us; then what matter war or peace, sickness or health, riches or poverty, even death?

The Incarnation — the story of the birth, earthly life, and death of the God-man with all the consequences of His continued Presence among us and of the divine life within us — seems fantastic to unbelievers. Yet truth is stranger than fiction. Pagans fashioned gods to their own image and plunged them into human events. But these gods were not divine and did not lift men to divine things. And here is the God of transcendent Divinity, unreached by any flight of human thought, found among men, descending to their life and lifting them to His!

We have believed this from our infancy. The Incarnation has become something accepted in our conception of the world. And so we are surprised when an unbeliever gasps: "But it is incredible!" Ought we not to agree: "There has been nothing else like it in human history. There never will be again!" When our Lord spoke of His Divinity, His enemies shouted in anger: "He blasphemeth!" And on hearing some of His teachings, even some of His disciples murmured: "This word is hard and who can believe it?"

At the thought of the Incarnation, at the vision of "Heaven on earth and God in man", the first emotion of a Christian ought to be one of wonder. We ought to rise each morning with wonder in our soul, the wonder of being so loved by God. There is a grain of truth in the sneer of Nietszche: "They must sing better songs to lead me to believe in their Savior. His disciples must give more evidence of being saved." For the Gospel, the message of joy which should be shouted like good news, weighs on many like a yoke on stupid oxen. And the minds of others are filled with doubt, because our eyes are not wide with wonder and our lips fail to catch up the song of angels.

If the joy of wonder is wanting in my life, there will be no conquering Christianity in it, there will be no joyful sacrificing of natural cravings for the consuming love of Christ. If the contemplation of the Incarnation does not fill my soul with wonder, if the sight of God become man leaves me unmoved, then I am more wooden than the sterile fig tree and more beastly than Balaam's ass. If there are no stars in my eyes, I will not lead others to Bethlehem.

Together with this feeling of wonder and this sense of the Divine, there comes a sense of the human and a feeling of security — a realization of the human at home in heaven. If we are filled with wonder at our Lord because He is divine, because He is One of the Three Persons in God, we are drawn more confidently to Him because He is so human, because He is one of us.

We know that His address was Nazareth. We know that the dust lifted as He strode along the roads of Galilee. We know that He was tired and thirsty as He sat on the wall of a well in Samaria. We know that His Heart was warm with tenderness as He gently yielded to His Mother in Cana, as He put His arms about the little children of Judea and blessed them. We know that He wept at the tomb of Lazarus and over the city of Jerusalem. We know that anger blazed in His eyes and filled His voice, as He condemned the "whited sepulchres" and whipped the thieves from the temple.

And we think: "How human! He is like us in all things!" Like us in all things except sin. But this does not leave Him less a man. Why do we say, "He's human!" of a sinner rather than of a saint? Sin has no part in manliness. No one was more manly, more strong and energetic, more tender and virile than Jesus — and He was without sin. But why is it that we are drawn to Jesus, because He was so human, because He was tired, because He wept? Ordinarily, we derive no pleasure from the fatigue of toiling men and are embarrassed by the tears of strong men. Is it not precisely because the Son of Man is also not like us?

Everyone likes to see an uncommon man with "the common touch". People were pleased to find their prince dancing on the village green or dallying in the market place. People are pleased to see an eminent statesman or famous scientist enjoying a movie or a football game. Children are overjoyed when some great athlete joins their game. In this regard we are all children; we are pleased beyond measure to know that it is the Son of God who is so like us.

There is another reason for our delight in finding Jesus so human. We learn that true human *perfection* does not blight the affections which brighten our lives, nor overrun the limits that mark them, that perfection will not leave us less human. There are some people who claim to fear perfection, because they will lose their personality, because they will become less human. But that is an idle fear. Legendary heroes have no weaknesses. Hercules is never tired. But the Gospel reveals Jesus weak with hunger, tired at the well, asleep in a boat during a storm. We imagine heroes as impassive supermen with eyes of steel and hearts like fortresses. But the eyes of Jesus are filled with tears and flash with anger and reveal agony, and His enemies sneer at Him as "a friend of Publicans and sinners".

Some, studying Him superficially, found Him only a man and not the most wonderful of men. A deeper study of His life reveals

Him as more perfect than any hero and superior to any superman — reveals Him as God! And still He is man, the perfect man! And looking on Him, I realize that I can become perfect while remaining myself, retaining my emotions, in spite of weaknesses, that I can become like Him without ceasing to be myself. It is not possible to lose something precious of personality, something of our humanity, if we are followers of Christ, if our life is modelled on His. For He was human, truly human, the most human of men, the perfect man.

Let us thank our heavenly Father for having given us His eternal Word. Let us thank our Lord for dwelling among us, for filling our lives with wild wonder and calm security. He could have saved us without the wonder of the Incarnation. But He willed to come among us, to be of our race, to walk our ways, to be our Model.

We have only to turn to Him, to look upon Him, to listen to Him, and we find the picture of perfection leaving every earthly perfection unfinished, the man "drawing all things to Himself," to God.

In our desire to save our own souls let us follow in the steps of the gentle Christ. Listening to Him we learn the mind of God, looking upon Him we see the divine Ideal, copying Him we become perfect.

In Jesus we find our divine Model. And if we live as He lived, if we die as He died, we will rise as He rose, and ascend as He ascended. If we follow Him from Crib to Cross, we will follow Him to the Crown, and our life will become a Rosary with its joys, with its sorrows, and with its glories. (To be continued)

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CONVENT QUERIES

When reading or hearing about mystic theology, I wish I could be a mystic too. But I am puzzled about mysticism and do not understand many things about the higher states of prayer and union with God. What should I do?

When all is said, the one necessary and indispensable element in mysticism is this: that God make His Presence felt within the soul and that the soul correspond by complete surrender of itself. The special graces of prayer come from God. If He does not give them, be content to remain on the beaten way. If He does give them, correspond by complete surrender of self, by holy abandonment.

In your prayer life you will quietly and happily strive to live in the Presence of God. You will look into yourself, into

the citadel of your being, into your immortal soul, and you will see God there. He is there as your Creator, as the Preserver of your existence, as the Light of your being, the Object and End of your life, your Father and your Friend. Make this indulgenced prayer one of your favorites: "My God, my only Good, Thou art all mine; may I be wholly Thine!" Rest in His arms without any fear, without care; for He has care of you.

Yes, see God in your soul, and see Him more particularly as the loving Father and Friend who desires to be in constant communication with you, as a Father with a child, as a Friend with a friend. "O my Love, on whom I lean and faint, that I may be strong!" exclaimed St. Augustine. Strange, isn't it, that you have sought in other things strength and happiness, and not in God alone? And it is all so simple. "I desire nothing from thee but a devoted heart," our Lord said to St. Gertrude.

What is here meant by the heart? It is all our activity — our rational activity, our consciousness, our meditation, determination, aspiration. St. Thomas says that a man's heart, as to his God, ought to have four qualities: a watching or attentive heart, a noble heart, a right heart, and a free heart — free with the liberty of the children of God.

What is meant by the "internal or external government of the community" in Canon 524 of Church law?

Canon 524 says plainly: "The ordinary and extraordinary confessors of religious women shall not in any way interfere with the internal or external government of the Community."

The internal government, according to Schaeffer (p. 387, 1940 edition) of a Community refers to the authority of the Superior, e. g., to determine the daily order of the house, to appoint the various officials, to assign duties. The external government refers to the authority of the local Ordinary over the Constitutions, appointments of confessors, etc.

As regards all regulations, appointment of tasks, excusing from the Rule, residence, traditions, customs, and the like, the confessor should leave such things to the Superior.

But it is not interference to give her advice, if asked. Also, he may call her attention to what he might wish to suggest. But as

Sisters should be slow in complaining to the confessor about the internal government of the Community, so too the confessor should be slow in acting on the complaint of any individual Sister. There may be cases where it is advisable to help a Sister, or perhaps even to save her from ruin. In most of these cases he will find it best to have the individual Sister take the initiative by laying the matter before her Superiors, who will then have to shoulder the responsibility for failing to do whatever was deemed necessary or advisable. Often a transfer is in question.

But the confessor should have nothing at all to do at any time with the financial matters of the convent, and these should not be presented to him in any way.

> *I am bothered much with unkind, uncharitable thoughts about my fellow religious, my Superiors, about everybody that steps on the toes of my self-love, so to speak. What should I do?*

In some religious communities it is a custom, introduced by the Founder and kept up to this day, to read a brief life of some saint of the day in the refectory during the breakfast in common, and then always to read for the rest of the time from the deeply spiritual and eminently practical *Imitation of Christ.* Over and over again that book is read. One never grows weary of listening to it.

Therein we read, apropos of your question, "If all were perfect, what should we have to suffer from others for God's sake? But God has so ordained that we may learn to bear with one another's burdens, for there is no man without fault, no man without burden, no man sufficient to himself nor wise enough . . . . If you wish peace and concord with others, you must learn to break your will in many things. To live in monasteries or religious communities, to remain there without complaint, and to persevere faithfully till death is no small matter."

You mention self-love, and rightly so. That is at the bottom of it all. Religious are so sensitive. They must be handled with soft kid gloves. In that respect they are a proud lot, generally speaking. The least little thing that goes contrary to their wishes throws their self-love into a turmoil of sensitiveness and they bubble and boil with unkind, uncharitable, suspicious, jealous,

envious thoughts, rash judgments, aversion, and what not! What a terrible indictment! We hasten to add, that we don't mean you who are not that way.

Here are some suggestions: 1. See Christ in others, and think of them, and speak of and to them, and act towards them as you would to the Savior Himself. He said, remember, "What you do to one of these you do to me." 2. Never give any expression by look, gesture, word, action, or omission to your feelings when you are oversensitive. 3. Never criticize anybody or anything anywhere, except in official capacity, and even then with moderation. 4. Invariably get busy picking out that person's good qualities.

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HOW IMPORTANT IS THE LITURGY?

AFTER fifty years of steady propaganda for the sacred Liturgy, all Catholics of today know the Popes' intense longing to see the movement as a living factor in all avenues of Catholic life. Convents were warned by the Holy Father a few years ago not to go too fast. This means that each Congregation should carefully study its Rule under this aspect before making any changes.

Here I will digress for a moment, in telling my readers that I know I am dealing with a very touchy subject. I know that someone might be thinking: "Mind your own business!" But since it is a problem for us Sisters, as it is of greatest importance for the future of all religious, I shall presume to go on, explaining the difficulties of a liturgical movement in the religious life of a Sister today. I wish to be clear and exact in what I say; but since the cause is so much more than a personal opinion, I shall be thankful for criticism.

To enter religious life means to part with everything which may hinder the perfect following of Christ and to accept everything which will promote it. The practical realization is not so simple, however. If we look at the history of the Church, we will often see how human nature has erred, even on the narrow road to perfection. Through fear of falling into an abyss some have shut

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their ears and eyes, clinging firmly to those who have gone before them and following blindly. When Holy Scripture mentions the failure of the Pharisees, it is not only an historical fact, but a perpetual warning.

Besides, we must never forget that the average nature of woman is pretty narrow and unsocial. This is a very happy factor in maintaining good family life, when blended in marriage with the different, and often opposite, masculine qualities.

In religious life this harmony is obtained in a supernatural way, but it does not mean that religious are superhuman. God asks for our co-operation in order to develop the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, without which religious life is impossible. Co-operation always calls for a leader, in such a way that each one knows his task and responsibility. God sent us His own Son, who founded an organized society with supernatural guarantee for its teaching. The sacred Liturgy is of the very essence of our revealed faith, which the Church daily puts before the minds of the faithful. Still, a convent is not a group of equally educated young women, whom a gifted priest can teach to perform and love the Liturgy under that spell of enthusiasm which the liturgical movement is apt to provoke.

The female nature's love for tradition, private devotions, sensible piety, and horror for laws and rubrics in spiritual life, together with the very different education of the members of each Sisterhood must first of all be checked. We must honestly and humbly recognize that, while Sisters in the whole world are hard-working and pious and given to prayer, there is and has been for several decades a lack of understanding of our holy religion and of the fundamental principles of human existence. It is not wise to conceal these facts from ourselves and from the clergy, for they must be solved and we can only do it by co-operation.

The average religious formation consists of 250 hours of conferences during postulancy and novitiate, distributed between Holy Scripture (the Psalms), Dogmatic Theology (the Sacraments), Church History (Monasticism in our case), Holy Rule, Customs, Latin, and Chant. And it is, according to Canon Law, a formation of the mind and heart for religious life, and not a period of regular study. Then a Sister gets her obedience and, except for weekly (sometimes only monthly) conferences, which

are mainly directed towards edification, she will seldom have time to acquire further knowledge. It is a very great wrong, because religious life should develop the mind and enrich the soul, and there exists a wide gap between our religious experience and intellectual comprehension. In France, Belgium, and for a great part also in Scandinavia, the Sisters have spiritual directors, who clear away the actual individual difficulties; but that is a very happy state of things which, alas, is not common.

I know some may say: "Now a Sister is beginning to complain, as the servants and workmen have done, but that is not supernatural – a Sister should be happy with crosses, should be pious and humble."

It is quite right, and here there is no question of complaint – if this condition were a healthy one for the religious life. But, how about that growth which is the only sign that our work has the blessing of God? It is not right for us to blame modern youth for the fewness of vocations today. As a whole, they are ready for sacrifice, they work hard, they love and respect their neighbor more than any other generation has done, and they have an honest wholesome way of living in the presence of God, who through His Son gave us that ineffable relationship between the God-man and men. But many youth have a feeling that religious life will not enrich them, perhaps even that the convent is a sort of hothouse for rare plants, but not for the common sturdy ones.

The trend of theological teaching today is not afraid of stating the God-willed value of reason, personality, and reality. Do our youth find the same broad-minded view in our convents? We should not be as the Jews at the wailing wall, weeping over our unhappy fate, but with a *mea culpa* open ears and eyes to that religious teaching which is for us too. We will discover things and ideas, which must be understoood in order to be lived. We must learn to think, and that is just what human nature hates to do; it prefers the easier way of imagination. We must let our much loved individual and personal devotion give way to primary things in entering into that social Body which, through the Sacrifice of Christ, became the Mystical Body. It is not something new, but it is something we must rediscover. We will soon learn to love and live it, if we only

can ourselves decide in its favor — and we must! God wants religious life. Too many saints can testify to His special love for us. He never forces anyone, but He, incomprehensibly generous, solicits our co-operation. Through the holy Liturgy, understood and lived, the beautiful vocation to a heavenly life in union with God, already lived on earth, will be appreciated anew and will develop unto the blessing of those within and without the cloister. SOROR R.M.

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The Trappist Community of Our Lady of Guadalupe Abbey, Pecos, New Mexico, is soon to be moved to a new site in Oregon. Their exceptionally beautiful New Mexico property is now for sale. It is considered suitable for a convalescent home or some such purpose for any religious group not dependent on natural resources for its support. An illustrated brochure with pertinent information may be had by writing the Father Abbot, Right Reverend M. Columban Hawkins, o.c.s.o., Guadalupe Abbey, Pecos, New Mexico.

THE CONVENT BOOK SHELF

PIUS X. The Life-Story of the Beatus. The New Italian Life of Pius X. By Fr. Hieronymo Dal-Gal, Translated and Adapted by Thomas F. Murray, M.A. 1954. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. xv-246 pages, cloth $3.50.

Here is an outstanding biography of St. Pius X, the outstanding life of the newly canonized Pope in the English language, as far as the reviewer knows. This excellence derives primarily from the author's competence and direct access to the best sources: the author was one of the chief defenders of the Beatification and Canonization Causes. He bases his writing on a vast amount of first-hand and authentic documentation.

Also, there is a completeness about this life, which impresses one from the outset: the chronologies of the saint's life and pontificate, with the dates of his chief acts, and a separate list of historical sources for those who would do further research. The eleven full-page illustrations help to tell the human story of the newest St. Pius.

The style is suited both to the greatness of Pius and to the ordinary quality of his life. The vast amount of anecdote holds one's interest for every page of the volume. The author does two things remarkably well: first, to leave the saint attractively human, while weaving around him the gold of sainthood, and second, to set forth the high and full spiritual ideal of the Pope-Saint.

One cannot read it without learning to know that sanctity is for oneself, not only what it was for Giuseppe Sarto. And there are the full overtones of universal sanctity that ring through the whole book: true faith in the Catholic Church, a love of the will of God, the spirit of great sacrifice, humility and poverty for all, the greatness of the Papacy and of the priesthood, the divine governance of our world and times. St. Pius X, pray for us and all our readers!

P.R.B.

THE LIFE THAT IS GRACE. By John V. Matthews, S.J. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1953. Pp. 196. Cloth $2.50.

It is unfortunate but inevitable that the simple catechism answers sometimes serve better as doors than as windows. In these literal days a short phrase can scarcely embrace the content intended by an age which relished symbol and sign. And it seems that the fundamental Christian notion of grace has been hit as hard as anything by this withering process. The gift-aspect has been stressed sufficiently, but the life-aspect not. So grace fits into a commercial vocabulary: a property, a possession, a currency, a thing highly negotiable, but competely external. While Martin Luther can be jubilant about this state of affairs (apart from an improvement in his theology), we should have some misgivings.

Fr. Matthews' book is an attempt to put us back on the right track. Grace is Life, divine Life in us... an interior transformation wrought by God, making us His children and members of His family. No longer mere creatures, this inner bond lifts us to a new level, unites us to Him and to one another. In a simple (not for scholars), thorough, and somewhat pedestrian fashion, the author explores sanctifying grace as Life.

The chapter plan is excellent. From Christ, the Life-giver, to a consideration of the kind of Life He gives...where this Life must be ...man's vocation to this Life, and its qualities...its end...the means to this Life...and its social nature, involving necessarily the doctrine of the Mystical Body. It should be especially helpful to teaching Sisters, for none of it is beyond the grasp of a high school student. R.H.

THE CONSTANT CROSS. By Very Rev. Rupert Langenstein, C.P. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1954. Pp. xii-109, $2.50.

Whether we acknowledge it or not, life presents a constant cross before us. It is for us to recognize that in the existence of our cross there lingers the shadow of the Cross of Christ. To portray this truism in a matter of fact way, the author considers common, human problems.

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